

Manchester Corporation Transport

The Trolleybuses



1938 - 1966

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No. 1344 (ONE744) was a 1955 BUT 9612T with Burlingham 60-seat bodywork. It was withdrawn in 1964 and purchased for preservation. It was the last trolleybus to run on the system on 31st December 1966 when it operated on a special tour. (E. Simpson).

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Although trolleybuses (or trackless cars) had been considered (and approved) by the Transport Committee as early as 1908, motorbuses were used instead, and it was not until 1935 that thoughts once again turned to the trolleybus.

At the time, tramway abandonment was continuing apace and it was with some patriotic fervour that suggestions were raised at a meeting of the City Council on 3rd April 1935 to use trolleybuses instead of motorbuses, since the power generated used home produced coal amongst other things, but the Transport Committee saw no virtue in using trolleybuses and recommended that motorbuses continue to be used as tram replacement vehicles. The City Council, however, had other ideas and the decision was reversed on 31st July 1935 and powers to operate trolleybuses sought. The tramcar services thought suitable for conversion were route numbers 28 (Piccadilly to Ashton), 29 (Guide Bridge to Trafford Park), and 31 (Fairfield to Chorlton).

In March 1937 the initial order for 76 trolleybuses was placed with Leyland (who would supply 38) and Crossley (who would supply the other 38). The bodywork would be built entirely by Crossley using Metro-Cammell all-metal frames, which were a standard Manchester Corporation feature of the time. A site on Rochdale Road, just outside the city centre had been purchased for the construction of a new depot and work commenced in the same month. By February 1938, overhead construction had been completed.

On the 1st March 1938 the first trolleybus ran along the former tram route (numbered 28) to Ashton, leaving the Portland Street terminus via Piccadilly, London Road, and Fairfield Street to Ashton Old Road. Intermediate turning loops were situated at Grey Mare Lane, Dakeley Street, Fairfield Road and Audenshaw Road (The Trough), for short workings. At the time another service to Ashton via Ashton New Road was being operated by tramcars and since it seemed illogical to operate one service with trams and one with trolleybuses, the second route to Ashton was converted to trolleybus operation. The terminus for this service was situated in Stevenson Square and numbered 26. The two services joined at Audenshaw, where there were turning facilities.

On the 1st February 1939 tenders were invited for the supply of another 77 trolleybuses, in anticipation of more conversions. On the 16th October 1939 a spur off the 28 service to Guide Bridge was opened and became route number 29.

Some of the earlier trolleybuses were in need of replacement by 1954 and the General Manager proposed to replace them with motorbuses. In addition the overhead on the Moston routes would need to be renewed over the next few years or so and, by converting these routes to motorbus, the council would save on the renewal expenses and release some of the 46 trolleybuses needed for these services for spare duties. At a meeting of the City Council in October 1954 these proposals were accepted and the Moston routes were abandoned, the last trolleybus from the Gardener's Arms running on the 7th August 1955.

In 1959, the Co-operative Wholesale Society completed plans to build a multi-storey office block on the corner of Miller Street and Corporation Street, the terminus of the 213 route past the University (formerly route 30). Again the General Manager recommended conversion of the route to motorbuses rather than moving the terminal point. In June 1959 the 213 service was taken over by motorbuses. A year later the 217 service (formerly route 57) to Haughton Green was converted to motorbus operation, in anticipation of a new housing estate being built there, and the trolleybus system was in decline.

Ashton Corporation, who operated trolleybuses on the Ashton to Manchester routes, were pressing the Council for information on the future of the trolleybuses. As a result, in November 1961, a report was put before the Council outlining the costs associated with the continued running of the trolleybuses. The report's conclusions - that the 1200 and 1240 series trolleybuses be replaced within two years, overhead renewals be kept to a minimum, and that the remaining vehicles be overhauled to last until 1967 - were adopted on the 6th December 1961.

In January 1963 the 210 trolleybus route (formerly 106) was partially converted to motorbus operation in peak hours then finally on 28th April 1963 the last trolleybus (No. 1308) ran. This enabled the 1200 and 1240 series trolleybuses to be withdrawn and only the 1300-class BUT's remained.

On Saturday 10th October 1964 trolleybuses ceased working the 219 route without notice, leaving only the Ashton routes 215, 216 and 218, trolleybus operated.

In May 1966 Manchester Corporation stopped working trolleybuses on the 218 route, although Ashton Corporation continued to work some journeys with trolleybuses. By the 27th August 1966, Saturday working by trolleybuses had ceased on the remaining two routes and Manchester Corporation workings were thus confined to weekdays only.

In November 1966 it was announced that the last day of trolleybus operations would be Friday 30th December 1966 and so it was that trolleybus No. 1354 departed from Stevenson Square on the 216x service towards Ashton for the last time. The very last Manchester Corporation vehicle to run over the trolleybus system was preserved vehicle No. 1344, which entered Hyde Road depot at 8 o'clock on New Year's Eve 1966, following a tour of the system by enthusiasts, after which the power was switched off and the trolleybus era was over.

Trolleybus Fleet List

1938-1966

This listing is in the format - Fleet No; Reg. No; Chassis; Chassis No; Body; Seating.

1938

1000-1027; DXJ951-978; Crossley TDD4; 92402-29; Crossley; H28/26R
1028-1037; DXJ979-988; Leyland TB4; 13611-20; Crossley; H28/30R
1050-1054; DXJ989-993; Crossley TDD6; 92302-06; Crossley; H38/30R
1055-1061; ENB175-181; Crossley TDD6; 92307-13; Crossley; H38/30R
1062-1087; ENB182-207; Leyland TTB4; 13600-10/15885-99; Crossley;
H38/30R

All the Crossley-built bodies were on MCCW frames.

Withdrawn **1950** (1055, 1061, 1064, 1066, 1073, 1078, 1080, 1082, 1085-1086),
1951 (1033, 1035, 1051, 1056, 1059, 1067, 1071, 1077, 1081, 1083), **1952**
(1072), **1953** (1016, 1076), 1954 (1003, 1017, 1029, 1031, 1036-1037, 1065),
1955 (1000-1002, 1004-1005, 1007-1008, 1010-1014, 1020-1022, 1028, 1030,
1032, 1034, 1053, 1068-70, 1075, 1084, 1087), **1956** (1006, 1009, 1015, 1018-
1019, 1023-1027, 1050, 1052, 1054, 1057-1058, 1060, 1062-1063, 1074, 1079).



No. 1052 (DXJ991) was one of the first batch of 1938 Crossley TDD6 trolleybuses with Crossley 68-seat bodywork, seen here before delivery sporting the 'streamline' livery. It was withdrawn in 1955. (GEC collection - courtesy David Beilby).

1940

**1100-1136; GNA18-54; Leyland TB5; 303431-67; English Electric; H28/26R
1137-1149; GNA55-67; Crossley TDD4; 92450/52/53/51/54-59/61;**

Crossley; H28/26R

1150-1166; GNA68-84; Crossley TDD4; 92462/60/63-67/69/68/70-79;

Crossley; H28/26R

All the Crossley-built bodies were on MCCW frames.

Withdrawn **1953** (1139), **1954** (1105, 1119, 1129-1130, 1138), **1955** (1100-1101, 1106-1108, 1110-1111, 1113-1114, 1118, 1120, 1122-1124, 1128, 1135-1137, 1140-1141, 1144-1145, 1155, 1160), **1956** (1102-1103, 1109, 1112, 1115-1117, 1121, 1125-1127, 1131-1132, 1134, 1142-1143, 1146, 1149, 1154, 1157), **1958** (1158), 1959 (1104, 1133, 1147-1148, 1150-1153, 1156, 1159, 1161-1164), **1960** (1165-1166).

1941

1167-1171; GNA85-89; Crossley TDD4; 92480-84; Crossley; H28/26R

All the Crossley-built bodies were on MCCW frames.

Withdrawn **1959** (1167-1168, 1171), **1960** (1169-1170).



No. 1136 (GNA54) was a 1940 Leyland TB5 with English Electric 54-seat bodywork. (GEC collection - courtesy David Beilby).



No. 1144 (GNA62) dating from 1940 was a Crossley TDD4 with Crossley 54-seat bodywork on MCCW frames. (GEC collection - courtesy David Beilby).

1942

1172-1174; GNA90-92; Crossley TDD4; 92485-87; Crossley; H28/26R

All the Crossley-built bodies were on MCCW frames.

Withdrawn **1959** (1172-1173), **1960** (1174).

1943

1175-1176; GNA93-94; Crossley TDD4; 92488-49; Crossley; H28/26R

All the Crossley-built bodies were on MCCW frames.

Withdrawn **1959** (1175-1176).

1949

**1200-1209; JVU707-716; Crossley Empire; 944405/06/22/21/04/02/
03/11/08/07; Crossley; H32/26R**

**1210-1219; JVU717-726; Crossley Empire; 94419/20/09/13/18/10/
14/15/12/25; Crossley; H32/26R**

Withdrawn **1963** (1200-1219).

1950

**1220-1229; JVU727-736; Crossley Empire; 94426/23/24/17/28/16/
27/01/30/31; Crossley; H32/26R**
**1230-1237; JVU737-744; Crossley Empire; 94429/33/32/34/36/35/37/38;
Crossley; H32/26R**

Withdrawn **1963** (1220-1237).

1951

**1240-1246; JVU745-751; Crossley Dominion; 94503/07/04/02/05/09/08;
Crossley; H36/30R**
**1247-1255; JVU752-760; Crossley Dominion; 94501/10-12/06/14/13/
15/16; Crossley; H32/26R**

Withdrawn **1963** (1240-1255).



1950 Crossley Empire No. 1227 (JVU734) with Crossley 58-seat bodywork. (GEC collection - courtesy David Beilby).

1955

1301-1347; ONE701-747; BUT9612T; 9612T185-231; Burlingham; H32/28R

Withdrawn **1962** (1346 [after accident]), **1964** (1305, 1307, 1309-1312, 1316-1317, 1319, 1323, 1326-1327, 1331, 1335, 1337-1340, 1344-1345, 1347), **1966** (1301-1304, 1306, 1308, 1313-1315, 1318, 1320-1322, 1324-1325, 1328-1330, 1332-1334, 1336, 1341-1343).

1956

1348-1362; ONE748-762; BUT9612T; 9612T232-46; Burlingham; H32/28R

Withdrawn **1964** (1351, 1355, 1358, 1360-1361), **1966** (1348-1350, 1352-1354, 1356-1357, 1359, 1362).

Manchester Corporation Transport Department - The Trolleybuses 1938 - 1966



No. 1302 (ONE702) was a BUT9612T trolleybus with Burlingham 60-seat bodywork. It survived until the final days of the system in 1966. (GEC collection - courtesy David Beilby).

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Additional information, corrections and photographs are always welcome.
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